

NFIP Call Center Celebrates 1 Year of Successful Customer Service and Positive Employee Experiences!

After Hurricane Sandy, FEMA recognized a need to enhance the customer service experience of NFIP policyholders. To address this issue one solution was determined to be stand up a pilot program for a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Call Center staffed with subject matter experts and employees trained in the nuances of the NFIP.

This effort required the availability of skilled staff who could work with survivors over the phone. A natural fit is the staff and resources within the National Processing Service Center (NPSC). Developed to handle a large volume of calls, physically arranged to be conducive to a team setting, and with an availability of staff, the Texas NPSC became the ideal setting for this initiative.

Implemented after flooding began in Texas on May 4, 2015 resulting in Major Disaster Declaration #4223 on May 29, 2015, this has proven to be a reasonable and practical solution to meet the needs of NFIP customers.



Once a public campaign started to advertise this service, calls began coming in from as far away as New York. Staff discovered customers appreciated the “one on one service and were grateful for the instant responses,” stated Janell Daleske, National Processing Service Center (NPSC) Human Services.

Since “opening” the NFIP Call Center, staff have answered over 45,000 calls through 1-800-621-3362 (FEMA), Option #2.

Calls are triaged and based on their complexity, are sorted as Tier 1, being the most basic issue, to Tier 3, being the most complex requiring the direct involvement of a subject matter expert.

An unexpected bonus is the staff satisfaction. NPSC staff, IM Cores, and Reservists received training on the NFIP processes. “Every day we learn something new! I now have confidence in my NFIP knowledge, how to look for, and find maps for callers so I can provide better information for those who call in,” Ben Torres, NPSC Human Services.

Reservists, and IM Cores, rotate through the NFIP Call Center every 120 days and provide additional support. While that might seem to cause an issue, extensive training, ongoing mentoring, and availability of subject matter experts allows for rapid transition.

This training creates a confident staff. “We are able to work with callers, provide them an answer, and it’s a full circle without passing the call on,” states Diane Hoff, NPSC Human Services, “and that’s a wonderful feeling!”



The NFIP Call Center has “helped insurance carriers, mortgage brokers, lenders, real estate agents, floodplain administrators, land surveyors, and engineers, providing information on flood risks, flood zones, and even how to use the FEMA Map Service Center,” states Diana Espino, NPSC Human Services.

This initiative has moved beyond its original scope to become a “great concept for FEMA to use to deliver consistent customer service,” states Charlie Jackson. More than that, it has become a tool for Reservists, Program Specialists, and other internal partners to ask questions about the NFIP while in the field.

For some staff they are able “to take this learning back to the field and are comfortable answering questions from survivors,” stated Aldolphus Chambliss, Community Education and Outreach Specialist for Mitigation.

Like a pebble in a pond, the NFIP Call Center has had a ripple effect throughout the Agency with multiple stakeholders benefitting from the effort: survivors, private sector, FEMA Staff and others. This “Best Practice” should continue because the benefits are clearly measurable in satisfaction by all who either work or call in to the NFIP Call Center.